

East Gippsland Bushfires 2019/20 Third Progress Report October 2022



This is a joint report from East Gippsland Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria



Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidawel people as the Traditional Custodians of this land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire, and their enduring relationship with country. The Traditional Custodians have cared and nurtured East Gippsland for tens of thousands of years. Council value their living culture and practices and their right to self-determination. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders, past, present, and future.

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Message from the CEO

This is the third recovery progress report following the East Gippsland Bushfires in 2019/20 and follows on from the previous report produced in May 2021. We acknowledge that collectively, an immense amount has been achieved and there continues to be challenges and for some, frustrations, as recovery continues.

Infrastructure, roads, bridges, our parks, and coastal areas across the fire affected parts of the region are being rebuilt, and where possible, enhanced for future resilience. The reopening of the Genoa Bridge marks the last of Council's managed infrastructure to be reinstated and is a significant milestone for the recovery of the Genoa community. There has been substantial progress across all recovery pillars - the natural environment, social, economic, built, and cultural and healing examples of which are described in this report.

The report also provides an update from East Gippsland's ten Community Recovery Committees as they share with us their achievements, plans and priorities for the future. The dedication of these volunteers and the outcomes they have been able to achieve for their communities is truly inspirational.

It is important to acknowledge that recovery is only possible with dedicated funding from all levels of government and the many organisations who have provided, and continue to provide, funding to support recovery. However, funding alone is not sufficient to support effective recovery and it is the advocacy and partnerships developed across business, research institutions, community and government that make the difference in recovery. The work of community, and the advocacy of Council and others has resulted in unprecedented investment in East Gippsland.

Whilst recovery for East Gippsland will take time, a lot has been achieved and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners who have worked with us on our recovery journey.

Anthony Basford
Chief Executive Officer
East Gippsland Shire Council

Introduction

This is the third recovery progress report for the East Gippsland Bushfires of 2019/20. This report reflects issues and priorities raised by communities and individuals through their engagement with various agencies and highlights the progress to date and arrangements for recovery work into 2022 and beyond.

This report has been developed by the East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC) as part of its Recovery Coordination role at the municipal level and supported by Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) under its Recovery Coordination role at the regional level. Input has been sought from many key recovery partners who have supported the recovery journey across bushfire impact areas of East Gippsland. EGSC and BRV are jointly responsible for coordinating the recovery and are committed to supporting a community-led approach to the recovery process.



Purpose

This third progress report aims to provide communities, agencies, volunteers and all levels of government with an overview of the recovery efforts of the East Gippsland 2019/20 Bushfires, and progress since the May 2021 Second Progress report.

It captures the work of Community Recovery Committees or representative groups as well as the work under each of the recovery pillars.

Recovery Coordination

Current recovery arrangements

As recovery continues, it is important that recovery coordination, or how recovery is managed, adapts to meet the changing needs of the communities that are impacted and in line with the resources, funding and priorities of our recovery partners.

The recovery model that was established in early 2020 included governance by the East Gippsland Bushfires Recovery Committee (EGBRC) and five recovery environments working groups. The EGBRC held its last meeting in September 2021. At this point, recovery coordination transferred to Council and BRV directly and Council and BRV have continued to fill this role since.

At that stage, many of the identified priority recovery actions had been delivered and the efforts of some of the working groups were largely completed or could be transferred to existing coordination arrangements. Reporting on these recovery actions was captured in two progress reports in September 2020 and in May 2021.

The working groups, with the exception of the Social Working Group (SRWG), transitioned into existing coordination arrangements in September 2021. The SRWG, remained functioning in its initial format until its final meeting on 18 July 2022.

With the funding and recovery service delivery landscape evolving as it has post 30 June 2022, all recovery stakeholders engaged in the SRWG and broader recovery partners committed to continue working under a joined up, locally driven recovery response and that the structures to support this work should pursue a broader recovery remit.

The development of these documents forms part of the accountability and commitment to reporting on recovery progress. A fourth and final progress report will be released in the second half of 2023.

Community Recovery Plans

The process of developing localised recovery plans has been unique to each community, which is particularly important in a municipality as geographically diverse and dispersed as East Gippsland. This place-based approach has enabled each community to connect with their recovery plan and identify their own recovery priorities.

All CRCs have identified key priorities for their communities following extensive community consultation. For some districts, community groups have developed Community Level Recovery Plans:

- » Bruthen District Community Recovery Committee Priorities Document
- » Buchan and District Community Renewal Plan
- » Clifton Creek Community Plan
- » Errinundra to Snowy Community Plan
- » MADRA Community-led Recovery Plan
- » Omeo Region Community Resilience Survey analysis to inform a community resilience plan.
- » Community Plan – Sarsfield 2030

District Action Plans

To ensure we are providing the support that is needed across bushfire-affected communities, Council and the BRV Team in East Gippsland, with input from community, have worked together to find the actions that we can take, or have responsibility for, to support and progress identified community priorities and outcomes.

This collaborative approach has resulted in the development of 10 bushfire recovery focused District Action Plans (DAPs). These plans describe a structured approach to assist communities to progress their recovery outcomes within each district.

The DAPs **do not** aim to supersede or replace community recovery plans or recovery priority documents developed by CRCs or representative groups. Instead, they inform what the support organisations working in East Gippsland will do to help communities achieve their identified recovery priorities.

These DAPs have also drawn on the planning and priorities developed by communities that were identified and documented through a range of engagement activities and practices. For example, several recovery activities are linked to the CRCs' Recovery Plans.



Reporting against DAPs will help keep CRCs and communities informed of the types and levels of support they can expect from these organisations throughout the next funded recovery period.

Social Recovery Planning

Council led the Recovery Reset – social recovery assessment (the Assessment) in partnership with BRV and under the SRWG. This Assessment was undertaken to further understand how social recovery has progressed and what is now required.

The Assessment's key findings and recommendations provide a strong foundation to plan how to address the most pressing social recovery needs and delivery gaps. Social Recovery priorities are identified as:

- » Community Connectedness
- » Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health
- » Housing and Rebuilding
- » Legal and Financial Counselling
- » Services for Children and Families

Community Centered Recovery

Community Recovery Committees and representative groups

Community Recovery Committees (CRCs) and representative groups remain integral to the recovery efforts across East Gippsland with 10 groups continuing to work without a break since the fires. The CRCs and their members have developed community strength and leadership, while using existing networks and structures.

There has been a diverse range of community recovery projects and activities undertaken by the CRCs across East Gippsland, which have significantly helped communities. We acknowledge the work that these groups have done and the significant contribution they have made to their community's recovery and future resilience. Further information on the work of the CRCs and representative groups can be found commencing on page 12.

CRC Linkup

A group of CRC and Representative Group members – the 'CRC Link-Up', have been meeting regularly since the 2019/20 bushfires to discuss and share their recovery progress, plans and the challenges that they experience. With an independent volunteer facilitator, this dedicated group has been meeting online due to COVID-19 restrictions and state government mandated lockdowns.

On 11 March 2022, the CRC Link-up representatives were finally able to meet face-to-face at a meeting in Bruthen. The key issues they raised through challenging and honest conversations included rebuilding, addressing community priorities and the difficulty in navigating, and applying successfully for competitive grants.

It was highlighted by all CRC Link-Up representatives that recovery is not over. Each of the communities are at a very different stage of their recovery processes. For some CRCs there appears to be work still needing to be addressed because of barriers experienced in their recovery journey. For other CRCs, the time is approaching to reintegrate their work within existing community structures, or to transition their work into longer-term representative community groups.

In June 2022, a consultant was engaged by Council and BRV to provide independent support to CRCs in planning for their future. The consultant will provide the opportunity to review and celebrate achievements, consider resetting the current model of operating to make them more sustainable, and to identify and plan for future priorities.

Acknowledging the unique insights community members have on the needs of their own communities, together with the commitment to a partnership focused recovery journey, the community-led recovery approach was adopted by partners soon after the bushfires to guide the critical recovery work within East Gippsland.

This approach has enabled recovery activities to be informed by issues and priorities raised by communities and developed with CRCs and other representative groups.

This in turn has promoted communities to be engaged in decision making and has ensured support from relevant agencies is targeted at fostering the development of local solutions to local issues and challenges.

Investing in recovery

Major Infrastructure Projects and Community Development programs and events

Substantial funding has been invested across East Gippsland to help meet community recovery and resilience needs over the last fifteen months. Many of these redevelopments, upgrades and new facilities will contribute to strengthening the future of the East Gippsland Shire and its communities. Community programs and events have also received funding, providing opportunities for social reconnections.

We acknowledge contributions have been received from various sources within all levels of government, philanthropic, local community organisations, and public appeals. While the information below primarily relates to bushfire recovery funding sources, we acknowledge there has been significant investment from a range of sources in East Gippsland through this period. This funding has been spread across:

- » Community facilities
- » Community projects
- » Councils and Community Services Organisations
- » Economic growth
- » Aboriginal Culture and Healing
- » Social reconnection
- » Our natural environment

Local Economic Recovery Grants Rounds 1 and 2 (including the Regional Economic Stimulus stream) at the community and regional level totaling over \$30M.

The East Gippsland Community Foundation announced its second round of community grants for bushfire impacted communities across East Gippsland. Twenty-seven community projects shared in the \$1.2M awarded.

The Victorian Bushfire Appeal has distributed funds of over \$15M to support the long term recovery of impacted communities in East Gippsland.

In May 2022, the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants were announced with funding for East Gippsland totaling approximately \$34M (including some grants that including programs across multiple local government areas).

Regional Development Victoria has provided \$200K provided for activities and initiatives that bring East Gippsland communities affected by the 2019/2020 Bushfires together. This program was particularly valued because of the streamlined nature of the funding process. Many Community events that have supported visitation, strengthened community networks and improved knowledge and awareness of bushfire recovery support have been held. To 30 June 2022, \$147,316 has been spent on 51 community events across 8 districts.

A more detailed listing of funded projects captured in **Appendix A** of the Report.



District Updates



Bruthen District

**Bruthen, Wiseleigh, Mossiface,
Fairy Dell and Double Bridges**

The population of the Bruthen district is approximately 2,100. During the 2019/2020 bushfires 66% of the land area was burnt and several dwellings were destroyed in Wiseleigh. The district was under threat from flame impact for three months. There were many economic impacts, and communities' lost power, telecommunications, and water during the fire event.

The Bruthen Community Recovery Committee (CRC) was formed to identify and support the needs of the district. The CRC sits within the Bruthen and District Citizens' Association as a subgroup and meets regularly to advocate for individuals navigating recovery, as well as to develop a recovery plan.

Progress So Far

The Bruthen District CRC formed following the fires and immediately started working to support the district's needs. They surveyed community on five pillars of recovery (resilience and sustainability, Aboriginal culture and healing, social recovery, biodiversity and environment, infrastructure and economic), and contributed to the Bruthen IGEM submission.

- » The 'Bruthen District Community Recovery Committee Priorities Document' was written following a review of past plans and was informed by the results of the community survey. Most actions identified in the Priorities Document have been delivered
- » The committee addressed the lack of water available during the emergency with a 100,000L tank and bore at the Recreation Reserve and a static water tank to protect the Bruthen town center.
- » They worked with East Gippsland Water to ensure the main water supply fills quickly and the pumps that supplied water to the top of Bruthen were replaced.
- » A deal on steel water tanks for individuals was



brokered and shared.

- » A summary Local Incident Management Plan flyer was printed and sent to all residents.
- » A funding application was successful to upgrade the Bruthen Recreation Reserve and the Mossiface Hall.
- » The funding application for the Bruthen Mechanics Hall kitchen upgrade has been lodged and they are awaiting the outcome.
- » Further funding for the Bruthen Streetscape upgrade was obtained and this project is nearing the construction phase.
- » Multiple events have been supported to help bring the community back together, including support for the Winter Festival 2021 and 2022, Bruthen Blues Festival, emergency management days and community family fun days.

Future Plans

- » The Bruthen District CRC will eventually fold back into the Bruthen District Citizens Association. They will continue to access support for community events and infrastructure as appropriate and will be ready to stand up for future emergency events.
- » This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For an understanding of where the communities are up to and contact details for this community go to: <https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/bushfire-community-recovery>

Buchan, Gelantipy & District

Bete Bolong North, Buchan, Buchan South, Butchers Ridge, Gelantipy, Murrindal, Suggan Buggan, W Tree, Wulgulmerang, Wulgulmerang East and Wulgulmerang West

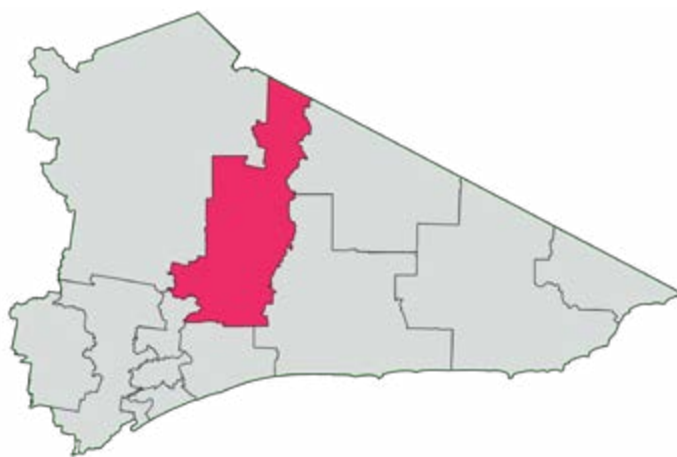
Buchan, Gelantipy and the surrounding district were significantly impacted by the 2019/2020 bushfires. With a population of approximately 460 people, community recovery and the natural environment are of high priority to the residents of this district.

The Buchan, Gelantipy & Districts Renewal Association (BG&DRA) was formed because of the bushfire events of 2019/2020. The representative group was brought together to voice the community's needs in recovery and to assist individuals and the community as a whole to get back on their feet by creating a Community Renewal Plan that strives for the betterment of the community.

Progress So Far

BG&DRA actively supports the community by delivering on and advocating on behalf of the needs of the community, identify and address shortfalls that arise in available services, and endeavor to increase economic activity within the district. They have achieved the following:

- » Delivered two Family Fun Days in line with the celebrations of their AGM
- » Completed a Tourism Opportunity Plan which identifies existing and future tourism prospects that promote economic growth and development in the district.
- » Secured \$4.35 million of funding from Federal, State and local sources to redevelop the Buchan Recreation Reserve.
- » Successfully applied for funding from the East Gippsland Community Foundation for a community owned generator at the Buchan Valley Roadhouse to provide 24/7 fuel access during an emergency



- » Secured funding to connect the community through the upgrade of community facilities at the Buchan Mechanics Hall, the Buchan Recreation Reserve, the Gelantipy Hall and the Wulgulmerang Recreation Grounds.
- » Continues to build relationships with Parks Victoria, East Gippsland Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria to further advocate and inform recovery from a local context.

Future Plans

BG&DRA continue to advocate for funding to:

- » Develop and increase tourism to the district (beyond the Buchan Caves).
- » Integrate localised fire preparation priorities into community preparedness activities.
- » Increase mental health and wellbeing support though the district - value adding to existing services, filling gaps, and providing support to vulnerable community members.
- » Upgrade the Buchan playground area for community and tourism.
- » Upgrade the Buchan Recreation Reserve.
- » Upgrade footpaths and parking across the district as part of the Streetscape Activation and Linkages Project.
- » Find innovative ways to connect the community through events and activities.

This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of where the communities are up to go to: <https://buchandistrictsrenewal.com.au>

Cann Valley District

Cann River, Noorinbee, Noorinbee North, Tonghi Creek, Buldah, Chandlers Creek, Club Terrace, Combienbar, Tamboon South, Tamboon/Peach Tree/Furnells Landing and Wingan

The Cann Valley district is made up of many smaller communities with a total population around 380 people. There were significant impacts across the district during the 2019/2020 bushfires. 92% of the land area was burnt and 25 dwellings were destroyed. Highway closures to all communities in January 2020 for five weeks, as well as the loss of power and telecommunications. COVID-19 lockdown restrictions and border closures impacted heavily on the district between March 2020 through to November 2021, as the district is the junction point for two highways entering Victoria from New South Wales. The Cann Valley District Representative Group (CVDRG) was formed because of the fires to provide for and advocate on behalf of the needs of the community.

Progress So Far

CVDRG became Incorporated in July 2021. They have actively supported the district with a focus on safety, preparedness and resilience, tourism and economic improvement, to develop a future based on strengths. They have achieved the following:

- » Multiple successful funding applications, including: The Black Summer Bushfire Grants (Safe, Healthy and Resilient Communities, Emergency Preparedness, \$448,912); Expression of Interest for the lease of the Noorinbee Winery Building from DELWP for the support of Cann River and surrounds; East Gippsland Community Foundation Grant (Community Led Capacity Building – Restoration of the Cann River Old Noorinbee Winery Building Restoration, \$69,031).
- » Distributed the Cann Valley District Community newsletter - providing local, regional and state information regarding bushfire recovery, agency updates, grant opportunities and wellbeing services.
- » Contributed to many community gatherings and events including the Cann Care Family Fun Day on 24 April 2021; Cann Be Ready Day (8 October 2021); Tamboon/Peachtree Association Fire Shed official opening on 3 March 2022; and Cann CARE Day on 21 May 2022.
- » Partnered with Council and the Cann Valley Community Working Group from July 2021 to May 2022 to develop the Cann Valley Tourism Opportunity Plan (TOP). The TOP identifies existing tourism assets and opportunities that support economic and social recovery in the area. A public information session was held on 29th March 2022 to present the findings.



Future Plans

- » People and Wellbeing - improve the health, safety, prosperity, and wellbeing of community members, hold community events and provide opportunities for social cohesion such as community conversations and celebrations within Cann River and outlying areas and facilitate TAFE accredited chainsaw courses for women.
- » Building and Infrastructure – increase the resilience, safety and accessibility of new and existing buildings and infrastructure. Including: Club Terrace Community Facility; Noorinbee Winery; Cann River Waste Transfer Station; and the Combienbar Recreation Reserve Community Hall.
- » Business and Economy – implement the TOP to improve the local economy through the creation of jobs by showcasing natural assets and encouraging tourists to stay longer and consider Cann District a holiday destination.
- » Environment and Biodiversity - enhance natural assets and environmental biodiversity. Including Landcare Stage 2 - Safe Access to the River, advocating for funding for environmental and biodiversity events and tourism projects and respectfully collaborating with First Nations people and acknowledging their enduring relationship with the land for tens of thousands of years.
- » Disaster Preparedness and Resilience Building – improve communication infrastructure and equipment for during emergencies, as well as ensuring water is available during droughts and fire events. Future interests include: Local Incident Management Plans (LIMPS) are updated and issued; installation of a sprinkler system on the SES and Ambulance Buildings; six community water tanks; Cann Be Ready Day 2022; Relief Centre training for community volunteers

This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of where the communities are up to go to: <https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/bushfire-community-recovery>

Clifton Creek

Clifton Creek, Waterholes, Deptford and parts of Granite Rock

Clifton Creek has a population of approximately 270 people. The outlying settlements of Waterholes, Deptford and Granite Rock that make up the entire district, bring the population to approximately 400 residents in total. During the 2019/2020 bushfires 60% of the land area was burnt and 13 dwellings, 329km of fencing and the Clifton Creek Primary School were destroyed. Communities lost power and telecommunications during the fire event.

The Clifton Creek Community Recovery Team (CCCRT) formed in response to the fires. CCCRT aim to operate with the best interests of the whole community considered and meet regularly to support the recovery of the district.

Progress So Far

To date, the CCCRT has achieved or continues to support the following:

- » Continued support for the local community and individual recovery needs including: Mental Health and Wellbeing via community groups, events and programs; Ongoing outreach from the Place Manager "Drop-In Wednesdays" for people who are able to come along after work to talk about issues and opportunities'; Ongoing weed recognition, removal and renewal workshops for farmers needing eradication advice and help
- » The Community Plan, created with collaboration and facilitation from a BRV Facilitator. Themes covered the Plan are community safety and preparedness, community connection and health, and creating a sustainable environment.
- » Ongoing partnerships with Council and BRV to identify resources and support for key projects;
- » Completed upgrades to the Community Hall including the installation of the STAND satellite communication system to provide satellite connection in an emergency; Installation of a storage shed; Changes to improve the locks and security systems.
- » Completed the resurfacing of a multi-game court.
- » Secured funding for numerous grants reaching over \$500k, including:
- » \$75,000 grant from East Gippsland Community Foundation to build a Community Stage;
- » Funding to host six mini-events in 2022, and to host the 'Big Bash' event proposed for 15 October 2022.
- » Successful grant for three separate static water tanks;
- » Funding received from Connect Well to hold community events and social functions.



Future Plans

Priorities identified for the future include:

- » Further support for community groups to host social recovery and wellbeing activities including: Continue to progress the pop-up playgroup for young mothers; Work to develop an ongoing social table tennis event; The Clifton Creek Big Bash event on 15 October 2022 to celebrate the community's survival and all the hard work of volunteers that helped them; A spectacular Christmas Light event with the hanging of lights at the Clifton Creek Community Hall.
- » Provide support for community leadership capacity and avoid burnout of existing members by engaging new residents who may want to join the CCCRT, implementing ongoing succession planning and finding a new editor for the Clifton Creek Newsletter
- » Improving reliable internet and phone services and establishment of a community technology hub in the hall office.
- » Creating safer community travel by organizing a walking / bike track from the primary school to the Recreation Reserve, and improving the roads (line marking, fix potholes and wider for bikes/walkers)
- » Removal of the old CFA satellite station and replacing it with a new purpose-built CFA Shed
- » Working to secure funding for an ultralight vehicle,
- » Work towards creating a Recycling Centre at the Town Hall and investigate spaces for local recycling bins, including protocols for functions to recycle, extending curb side waste collection, and recycling awareness and education.
- » Completing the new Community Stage by October 2022.
- » Look at having LIMP's created for each of the different neighbourhoods, as each area has different needs and access points

This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of where the community is up to go to: <https://cliftoncreekcommunity.com>

Errinundra to Snowy District

Bendoc, Bonang, Cabanandra, Deddick Valley, Delegate River, Dellicknora, Haydens Bog, Tubbut, Goongerah

The population of the district is approximately 340 people across a land area of 208,905 hectares. During the 2019/2020 bushfires, the district lost substantial old-growth and native forests including wildlife habitats with countless native birds and animals. In total, 39% of the land area was burnt and 19 dwellings were destroyed. Roads, power and communications were cut off for many weeks. The COVID Pandemic which followed has extended the impacts on these isolated communities. The Errinundra to Snowy (E2S) Community Recovery Committee (CRC) was formed from the District Representative Group as a result of the fires to support the needs of the community.

Progress So Far

The E2S CRC adopted the 2019 Community Plan as their Recovery Plan. The Community Plan was already responding to the issues and benefits of being remote and under-serviced, and those issues were exacerbated as a result of the bushfires.

- » Meeting monthly to establish and refine their recovery agenda, focusing on local communities needs as well as the entire district. Sub-committees meet at regular intervals or as needed.
- » E2S has identified and committed to plans that will respond to infrastructure, social and environmental recovery with the understanding that reaching these goals is their best form of preparedness.
- » Improved road safety and access between localities
- » The community has worked with Regional Roads Victoria, DELWP and others for the Bonang Road to be fully sealed, insuring safety while protecting amenity.
- » Optimisation of existing community halls and retired school buildings, as safe resources appropriate to a range of social and community activities
- » Improved local access to basic services, particularly health care, mental health services, police. Currently residents travel outside the district, and often the state to access fundamental services.
- » Working to protect remaining native forests and promoting nature-based tourism that builds



a sustainable economy that supports local communities with minimal disruption.

Future Plans

Future plans are to sustainably implement the above programs, specifically:

- » Establish and/or improve telecommunications and internet access. There are still large areas of the district without internet or mobile phone access.
- » The installation of the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) satellite communication system, together with grants received from BRV and East Gippsland Community Foundation will help to complete facilities in the Goongerah, Bonang, Tubbut and potentially Bendoc Community Halls to act as 'Service Hubs' for telehealth, co-working and distance education.
- » These facilities will encourage services to work in the district
- » Develop a Nature Based Tourism economy by: Restoration/protection of tourist infrastructure including building and improving appropriate infrastructure for accommodation and camping; Leading the campaign to create the Emerald Link and the Sea to Summit trail; Boosting the economic and employment potential by creating small businesses and employment opportunities in hospitality, tour leadership and environmental education.

Each program, as it develops, reveals other needs to be addressed, and the CRC seeks to collaborate with EGSC and other to respond holistically and equitably.

This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For an understanding of where the communities are up to and contact details for this community go to:

<https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/bushfire-community-recovery>

Mallacoota and District

Communities in the district include Mallacoota, Genoa, Wangarabell, Maramingo Creek, Wallagaraugh, Gipsy Point and Wroxham River

The population of the district is approximately 1,200 people. As a result of the Black Summer fires, 83% of the land area was burnt and 123 homes were destroyed. One life was sadly lost in the Genoa district during the fires.

The only road in and out of town was closed for 39 days resulting in over 1,500 visitors and residents being evacuated by air and sea by the Australian Defence Force.

The economic impact and throughout 2020, with the additional impacts of COVID, was profound. The devastating impact on flora and fauna is having an ongoing emotional and psychological impact on residents.

In the immediate aftermath of the fires, a 'Thinking Group' was formed. This group was supported by recovery mentor Steve Pascoe.

After extensive community consultation, the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association (MADRA) was formed and has grown to over 780 members. The Thinking Group also conducted a Snapshot Survey to gather initial feedback from the community to inform the locally led recovery process.

The 12 members of the first iteration of the MADRA Committee were elected through an independent election overseen by the Victorian Electoral Commission on 21 May 2020. The second iteration of the MADRA committee was elected at the first MADRA AGM on the 17th of August 2021.

Progress So Far

Many people are working hard in the Mallacoota District alongside MADRA for community-led recovery – local volunteer organisations, clubs, and charities as well as our politicians, government and non-government agencies. The efforts of these groups, combined with MADRA's community consultation, advocacy and support for numerous recovery initiatives, have seen well over \$35M committed to recovery projects in the district.

Some key projects includes:

- » Genoa-Mallacoota Road \$14.7 m
- » Mallacoota Golf Club \$1.89 m
- » Improving telecommunications \$2m
- » Maurice Avenue Streetscaping \$1.5m
- » Combined Emergency Services Facility \$4.57m



Some of MADRA's recent achievements include:

- » Commitment from Minister Richard Wynne for ten social and affordable residences to be constructed in the Mallacoota District to ease housing demand
- » Consulting with community to identify needs and solutions, advocating for community members whose cases do not fall neatly in the guidelines and holding meetings with community, government, non-government agencies and donors
- » MADRA have written 104 letters of advocacy to government and other organisations, and have produced 48 letters of support for community groups between July 2020 to May 2022

Future Plans

MADRA's ongoing and future priorities include:

- » Succession planning for the current committee and the Recovery Plan to ensure the hard work of the past and current committees will be taken into the future sustainably
- » Supporting and advocating for replacing lost housing stock and mitigating barriers to rebuilding
- » An ongoing commitment to fuel management and support for MADRA's Fuel Management Working Group to ensure that fuel management issues remain a top priority
- » Supporting and encouraging local business development, entrepreneurship, employment and educational opportunities, such as the Wilderness Workspace initiative, to build community strength and resilience
- » Supporting and advocating for increased energy resilience for the community.

This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of where the communities are up to go to: <https://madrecovery.com/>

Communities of the Omeo Region

Omeo, Swifts Creek, Benambra, Ensay, Ensay North, Brookville, Cassilis, Doctors Flat, Hinnomunjie, Livingstone Valley, Omeo Valley, Reedy Flat, Glen Valley, Cobungra, Shannonvale, Bingo Munjie, Tambo Crossing, Tongio, Anglers Rest, Bindi, Uplands, Bundara

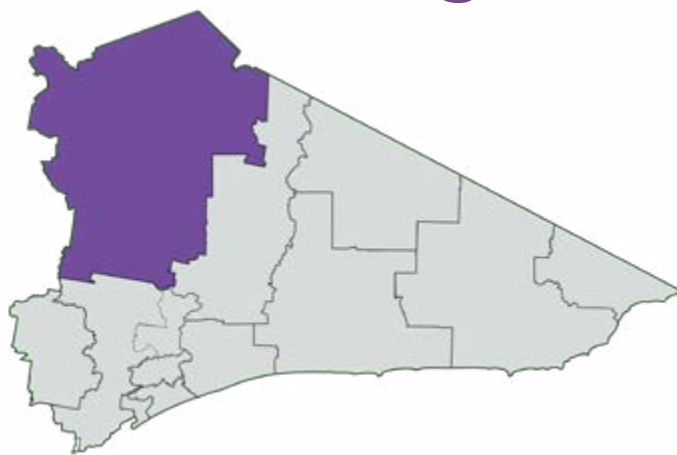
In the communities of the Omeo region there is a population of around 1,400 and encompasses almost 600,000 hectares in size. There were multiple impacts across the district from November to February during the 2019/2020 bushfires. 30% of the land area was burnt and 15 houses and 36 sheds were lost. The economic impacts were significant and communities lost road access, power and telecommunications during the fire events for significant lengths of time. Access to reliable power, communication and road access continue to be problematic.

The Omeo Region Community Recovery Association (ORCRA) was formed in June 2020. The group became incorporated and sought expressions of interest from community members across the Omeo region to join the group. COVID-19 limited face to face access until towards end of 2021. The AGM in October 2021 provided the opportunity to once again meet face to face, and many community groups welcomed the chance to attend, share a meal and network. The ORCRA Resilience Survey identified five priority areas for attention: reliable power and communications, road access, fuel management and mental health. Working groups are organising workshops on each of these areas.

Progress So Far

ORCRA has supported community grant applications from all communities seeking to improve facilities and community hubs. A consultant is currently developing a Resilience Plan for each of the communities to improve emergency preparedness.

The ORCRA Facebook site is becoming a 'go to' site for sharing information across scattered communities and is a great way for communities to showcase success stories of new facilities like the Tambo Crossing Community Facility (The Shed) and the upgrade to Cassilis Recreation Reserve shelter, Angler's Rest Walking Trail



Loop concept planning and the installation of communication systems in the Bundara Valley ORCRA has an important presence in giving a place-based approach to the continuing recovery of infrastructure, social, economic and environmental aspects of community life.

Future Plans

- » Consultant engaged to develop a brief to explore potential uses for the Benambra Recreation Reserve, Neighbourhood House, Hall, CFA shed and school; funded by BRV.
- » Continuing work on mapping and updating community resilience plans, fuel management plans and local incident management plans
- » Resilience Planning is a major focus for the CRC.
- » Continuing facilitated workshops in the region and within communities on the five priority areas.
- » Swifts Creek Recreation Reserve upgrade
- » Other major initiatives alongside bushfire recovery in the region include:
 - » development of Omeo Mountain Bike Track
 - » the Swifts Creek Community Transition from hardwood timber harvesting;
 - » the reinvigoration of the Omeo Shire Community Access Radio;
 - » review of Health Service capacity in disasters;
 - » Stockman's Mine development
 - » working with the North East Catchment Management Authority and other organisations and community groups on projects of common interest.

This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of where the communities are up to go to: <https://www.facebook.com/ORCRAInc>

Orbost District

Orbost, Newmerella, Marlo, Bemm River, Cabbage Tree Creek, Jarrahmond, Brodribb River, Corringale, Lochend, Simpsons Creek, Waygara, Bellbird Creek, Cape Conran, Manorina, Sardine Creek, Murrungower, Tabbara, Sydenham Inlet

The Orbost District has a population of 3,889. The Orbost District was highly impacted by the 2019/2020 bushfires. 76% of the land area burnt and surrounding National Parks lost many flora and fauna. The local economy, struggling already due to timber industry changes, was hit harder by limited summer trading. Many communities lost telecommunications and power during the fire event and were under significant threat multiple times during the 3 months the fires burned around the district.

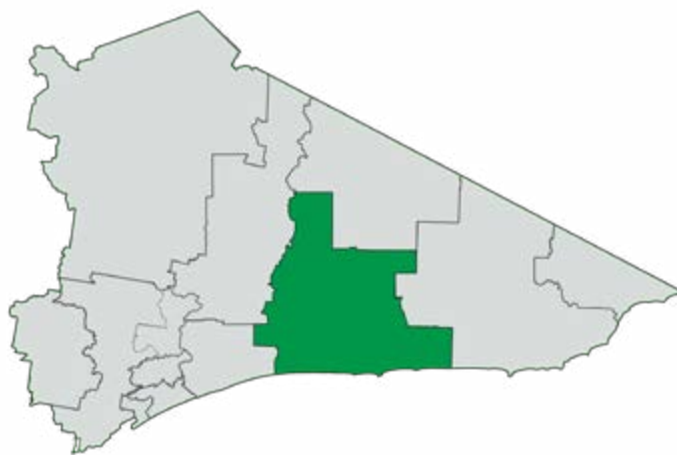
The Orbost District Community Recovery and Transition Committee (ODCRTC) was formed as a result of the fires and impacts of transition in the timber industry resulting from The Victorian Forestry Plan.

Progress So Far

The ODCRTC have three working groups, People and Wellbeing, Fire Preparation and Project Review (Planning).

The People and Wellbeing working group focus on supporting and promoting initiatives with a wellbeing focus, collaborating with groups and services and understanding and informing of the districts needs and priorities.

- » Recently the committee were successful in a grant to support programming and facilities needs of the Orbost Neighbourhood House and to enable them to run free programs that promote and support wellbeing and community connections.
- » The Fire Preparation working group have surveyed community in relation to fire readiness and used the data to successfully apply for support to run Fire Preparation Demonstration Days across the district followed by a Fire Expo/Family Fun day.



- » The Project Review subgroup have been supporting other groups/clubs and organisation to access funding support.
- » Monthly progress articles are shared with community and the committee are currently running a broader survey to feed into a priorities document for the district.

Future Plans

Future plans include delivering against current grants, further support of the Timber Transition project, nature based tourism, the Orbost to Marlo Shared pathway project and supporting leadership, capacity development and the development and delivery of a Orbost District Priorities Document.

This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of where the communities are up to go to: <https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/bushfire-community-recovery>

Sarsfield



There were multiple impacts across the Sarsfield district during the 2019/2020 bushfires. 49% of the land area was burnt and 77 dwellings were destroyed. Communities lost power and telecommunications during the fire event. 72% of the 276 homes in the area were impacted and more than 130 residents were displaced. The Sarsfield Recreation Reserve and Hall Committee supported the community with relief efforts during and immediately after the fires. The Hall Committee established a dedicated recovery committee, the Sarsfield Community Association, in August 2020, to support and plan Sarsfield's recovery.

The committee meets regularly and has established sub-groups to plan, support and deliver various recovery priorities and projects.

Progress So Far

The Sarsfield Community Association formed to meet the needs of the Sarsfield community. The committee have worked tirelessly to ensure a community led recovery process. With the communities help they have developed a community plan, Sarsfield 2030. They have developed a Master Plan for the Recreation Reserve and the Nicholson River Picnic Reserve. With communities input they have developed a landscaping and playspace design with cultural elements and have started to deliver against these plans. A multipurpose court and cricket nets upgrade has been delivered with funding to upgrade the toilet block also received. The committee have also focused on Social recovery with monthly Friday Night Feeds approx. 120 community members attending regularly, a Fire Expo, multiple family friendly events, the Sand Hill Ashes, partnered with Bruthen Cricket Club

and have a C Grade team based at Sarsfield, yoga, art therapy, weekly Ladies afternoons, a tool library, kayaking trips, youth focused activities and so much more. Every step of the way the Sarsfield community have been at the centre of everything they do.

Future Plans

Sarsfield have been promised \$3.6m by the previous Federal Government to help deliver against their plans. They are developing a business plan to ensure sustainability. They are working towards the delivery of a new hall and community space, connected walking tracks and lots more social community connection.

The committee will continue to advocate for individual need while looking to the future of the Sarsfield community. In only two years and 3 months since the fires went out this committee have achieved so much but there is a long way to go.

This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of where the communities are up to go to: <https://sarsfield.com.au/>



Wairewa

The locality of Wairewa was significantly impacted by the 2019/2020 bushfires. With a small population of 87 people, 86% of the land area was burnt and 11 dwellings were destroyed. The small community suffered severe stress and anxiety due to direct flame impact and many lost their livelihoods based on the expansive fruit, vegetable, olive, beef and dairy production. Stock losses were extensive. Roads, power and telecommunications were cut off for many days and the iconic, heritage-listed O'Grady's wooden trestle bridge was significantly damaged. The Wairewa Community Recovery Committee (WCRC) is a small and cohesive group that has worked tirelessly to meet the needs of the community in addition to their personal recovery activities.



- » Lobbied EGSC to reopen and maintain Wairewa waste Transfer Station

Development of nature-based tourism focusing on the Rail Trail and the countryside around the beautiful Wairewa Valley.

Progress So Far

The WCRC has met fortnightly to implement these initial priorities:

- » Administer support, and collaborate with other regions and districts, agencies and services
- » Strong success in securing grants and funding from a range of sources with advocacy and partnership from a range of services

Priorities achieved are:

- » Upgrades to the hall and precinct that re-establish community connectedness by:
 - » providing playgrounds and play equipment for community use. Provide community barbecues and picnic tables under shade, refurbishment of the tennis courts
- » Upgrades to the hall to provide a safe and secure centre for the community by:
 - » installing back-up power generator, solar system with 12 hour battery, dedicated second water tank for on roof sprinkler system,
 - » renovating bathrooms to ensure all abilities access and shower facilities.
 - » upgrades to the kitchen to facilitate safe preparation and clean-up for large and small groups
- » In conjunction with EGSC ember proof hall, upgrade window glass, screens and doors to BAL rating levels and provide robust communications including internet and community WiFi

Future Plans

The CRC is aiming to complete these items from their recovery plan:

- » Develop O'Grady's Bridge precinct as a tourism vantage point with long vehicle parking and turn around area, picnic and rest area facilities supporting an educational and historical experience catering to visitors, walking tours including multi day walks, bicycle tours and horse-riding trails
- » Secure consistent safe access to the valley by improving the road across Bills Creek to eliminate flooding that closes the road
- » Continue to lobby DELWP to improve Carl Smith, 3 Mile and 10 Mile roads as alternative access roads when required to access Wairewa.
- » Continue to lobby EGSC to remove/prune fire-killed vegetation overhanging Wairewa road and adjoining fences.
- » Re-establish social connection through community events in and around the Hall precinct and with other local communities and organisations.

This is a snapshot of some of the achievements of the community so far. For a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of where the communities are up to go to: <https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/bushfire-community-recovery>

Highlights by Recovery Pillars



The Natural Environment

Between 2014 to 2019, East Gippsland's biodiversity was severely impacted by drought (which also impacted farmers, the broader business community and our rural communities). Then the Black Summer bushfires burnt more than 50 per cent of our shire. More than 870,000 hectares burnt in the region, with 59 per cent at high or very high severity.

Council's road network was damaged with over 1200km of roadsides impacted, half (615km) of these roadsides considered to be of high conservation value under Council's roadside value mapping system. A variety of vegetation types were impacted including forests, heathlands and woodlands and associated flora species.

Council received funding under the Federal Government's Bushfire Recovery for Wildlife and Habitat Community Grants program for roadside weed work in high value areas that supported recovery of roadside vegetation across the burn area which has resulted in over 600km of roadside weeds treated in 2022. Further work where resourced will focus on reassessment of roadside vegetation in impacted areas and its recovery development over time.

A second grant from the Federal Government focused on weed treatment in foreshores around Mallacoota, where 70 hectares has been treated for emerging weeds in recovering vegetation. This area surrounds the Mallacoota Coastal Walk and highly visited areas such as Pebbly and Betka beaches. Fifteen species were identified in this area during these works and treated.



Top - Buchan Orbost Road early 2020 (prior to re-opening)
Below - Buchan Orbost Road, July 2022



Inkweed (*Phytolacca octandra*) was in high density post fires as an initial colonising species and has reduced with the recovery of native vegetation across the foreshore areas. In general, vegetation recovery across the foreshore in non-residential areas was of high value and rapid but understorey development was diverse.

Parks Victoria (PV)

Eastern Victoria Region of Parks Victoria recruited 30 additional staff in December 2021 to support on-ground recovery works including hazardous tree removal, track and trail clearing and repairs to roads and minor assets. This new Recovery Team works program has focused on visitor safety and improving visitor access with activities such as road repairs, roadside vegetation management, hazard tree removal and walking track repair and clearing.

With a focus on wildlife in recovery there has been monitoring and genetic assessment programs conducted to assess the population resilience of Spot-tailed Quoll and Long-footed Potoroo. The first cohort of translocated Eastern Bristlebirds was successfully released at Wilson's Promontory to create a second Victorian population and reduce the chance of extinction in future fire events.

The Southern Ark program continued to control foxes on an expanded footprint to support the recovery of threatened small mammals. East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and Parks Victoria partnered to undertake pest plant and animal control in Alpine Peatlands and Littoral Rainforest, including Broom control in the upper Mitchell River Catchments. A cross-tenure approach with partner agencies completed remote weed control as part of an ongoing monitoring and treatment program. Future natural recovery priorities for Parks Victoria include continued roadside fire regrowth mulching and hazardous tree removal.

Parks Victoria scientists, Dr Mark Norman and Dr Mark Antos, have visited fire-affected areas and observed that while there's a way to go for some areas others are recovering well. Watch the video link to see what they have discovered and learned.

- www.youtube.com

Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP)

A number of activities have been successfully delivered to protect recovery of high biodiversity assets, most with Traditional Owner delivery participation. There has been significant progress in the areas of:

- » Wildlife in Recovery
- » Pest and Weed Control
- » Species recovery overlays
- » Fence reinstatement
- » Waterway restoration, bank stabilisation
- » Water quality monitoring
- » Vegetation monitoring
- » Engaging young people in young people to experience natural resource management and bushfire recovery program delivery
- » Nature based bushfire recovery research and evaluation
- » Feral pig control
- » Recovery overlays informing planned burning and habitat impacts.
- » The Reading and Healing Country Project



Photo: by Bryce Watts-Parker
Southern Green Stream Frog (*Litoria nudigitus*).
A common frog found along streams and vegetated waterways.

The feeding habitat of Glossy-black Cockatoo was mapped in priority areas between Lakes Entrance and Orbost to inform planned burning and protect the most important feeding habitat for this species.

A Far East Eden Strategy has been developed providing a strategic approach to managing weeds on public land within far East Gippsland. This strategy identifies the strategic priorities for weed treatment and surveillance. This was developed collaboratively with DELWP, East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Council and PV and extends east from the Snowy River to the NSW border.

The Frogs of the Far East initiatives were conducted. More than 300 frog observations made. The three most observed species of frogs since the fire are the Green and Golden Bell Frog (47), Peron's Tree Frog (46) and the Southern Leaf Green Tree Frog (42).

The Social Recovery

CRCs have been reporting and including within their plans, that the social, emotional, and mental health recovery for their communities has been slow, appears incomplete, and remains as one of their key concerns. Many agencies which provide social recovery support are anticipated to be approaching the end of their current funded period.

The Recovery Reset – social recovery needs assessment was initiated to develop a strong understanding of the extent of the services potentially winding down, and what are the remaining levels of social recovery needs are across the affected communities.

This assessment was undertaken from late January to May 2022, led by Council, with support by Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) - under the arrangements of the Social Recovery Working Group (SRWG) for the 2019/20 Black Summer Bushfires. The assessment consisted of a survey provided to social recovery support services, focus groups discussions offered to agency networks and CRCs, and interviews with key agencies and organisations.

The assessment has provided key insights into what are the most pressing social service recovery needs, and where delivery gaps remain. The services reported within the survey that: 89% of all respondents cited social connection as the most pressing social recovery need, followed by 67% for exhaustion and burnout, 64% for mental health services, and 57% for housing assistance.

From the survey, coupled with focus group discussions and interviews, the areas where people were assessed as not coping well and required ongoing services included:

- » Emotional wellbeing,
- » Mental health,
- » Community connectedness,
- » Services for children and families,
- » Housing,
- » Rebuilding, and
- » Financial counselling.

In the survey - respondents were asked if their organization had experienced an increase in service demand over the past 6 months; 41% of services which responded- indicated they had received a significant increase in service demand, with 38% experiencing a moderate increase.

Council and BRV have now finalised these reports with the SRWG, and will provide them to all who have participated across the social services sector, CRCs, etc. Council will then share the reports with a broader audience to make sure the ongoing social recovery needs for the East Gippsland affected communities are well known.

Housing

Since the fires, only 15% of the 346 homes impacted by these fires, have been replaced. The barriers for people to rebuild and the housing insecurity issues are complex, resulting in escalating financial, legal, emotional and wellbeing issues for these people. Widely held concerns were expressed in all reports of the Assessment about housing insecurity and a lack of affordable housing, which is reported to be a continual source of frustration and stress across East Gippsland.

These factors identified by participants of the Assessment include increasing housing costs, rising costs of living, rent increases, and a very low number of available rentals. In interviews with key support agencies, they raised significant concerns that some community members are feeling increased levels of stress and are at risk of ultimately becoming homelessness. It was also reported that the lack of housing is forcing people to move away from their communities and away from recovery services.

Agencies have reported that there are a range of challenges for families which include managing the pressures associated with shared living arrangements with other family members. Families also finding themselves in insecure accommodation and with few suitable options, but which are necessary for maintaining access to locally based employment and education stability.

For Mallacoota, the recent government announcement detailing an investment of at least five public/ social housing dwellings and five affordable housing dwellings will help to increase housing options across the Mallacoota district.

Community Connectedness and mental health

In the Recovery Reset – social recovery needs assessment (previous page), service providers who completed the survey listed two of the top four most pressing needs as social connection at 89% and mental health services at 64%. Participants also assessed people as 'not coping well' and requiring ongoing services for emotional wellbeing, mental health and community connectedness.

Within the assessment, it has been reported that effective psychosocial recovery support, which is provided through many services across the Shire, has improved people's ability to recover. To date, bushfire case support has been able to engage with hundreds of people who may not have been eligible for support in the 'mainstream' system, or who may not have sought access to other services. Many CRCs have identified community connectedness and wellbeing within their recovery or priority plans, with opportunities for future support to include improved access and services to mental health care and a large focus on community facilities improvements and accessibility.

Significant funding from all levels of government and has been invested in rebuilding or improving community facilities including public halls and recreation reserve buildings. These essential facilities enable communities to be socially connected, physically active and positively engaged with a broad range of community activities and events.

Following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, it has been noted that more people are starting to engage and talk more about their experiences with the bushfires, which reflects that for some people their healing is only just starting. Community connectedness and cohesion is enhanced when people are able to come together through events like; family days, festivals, 'Be Ready' Days, sporting events, arts therapy and community dinners to name a few. Funding has enabled communities to connect through projects, activities and events identified and delivered by the community. Raising awareness and education, such as sessions delivered by trained psychologists have been recommended and made available to communities.

While we acknowledge the investment in wellbeing is moving in the right direction, we note that social recovery is not complete, and many people are now just starting to reach out for help. People are beginning to trust and rely on services that have arrived/funded since the fires. For this reason, the provision of extending services in these areas, advocating for funding, and understanding the most appropriate service delivery has been a focus of Council and BRV since the assessment was completed in May 2022. This has included future funding submissions including allocation for supporting community wellbeing and support for volunteers involved in recovery.

The Built Environment

Private Assets and Rebuilding

More than two years since the fires, rebuilding remains slow. The Rebuild Support Service (RSS) established by Council in partnership with BRV to provide specialised advice to help streamline both planning permit and application requirement and advice remains in operation.

The numbers of those impacted across such a vast geographical area has provided challenges for the RSS to connect in. To address this issue, during August/September 2021 the Rebuild Support Service endeavored to contact either directly or through a case worker, all residents who had dwelling impacts. This was to advise residents of the service and support available to then refer in and undergo an intake process.

Looking forward there are a range of challenges being faced by those rebuilding. Some of these include:

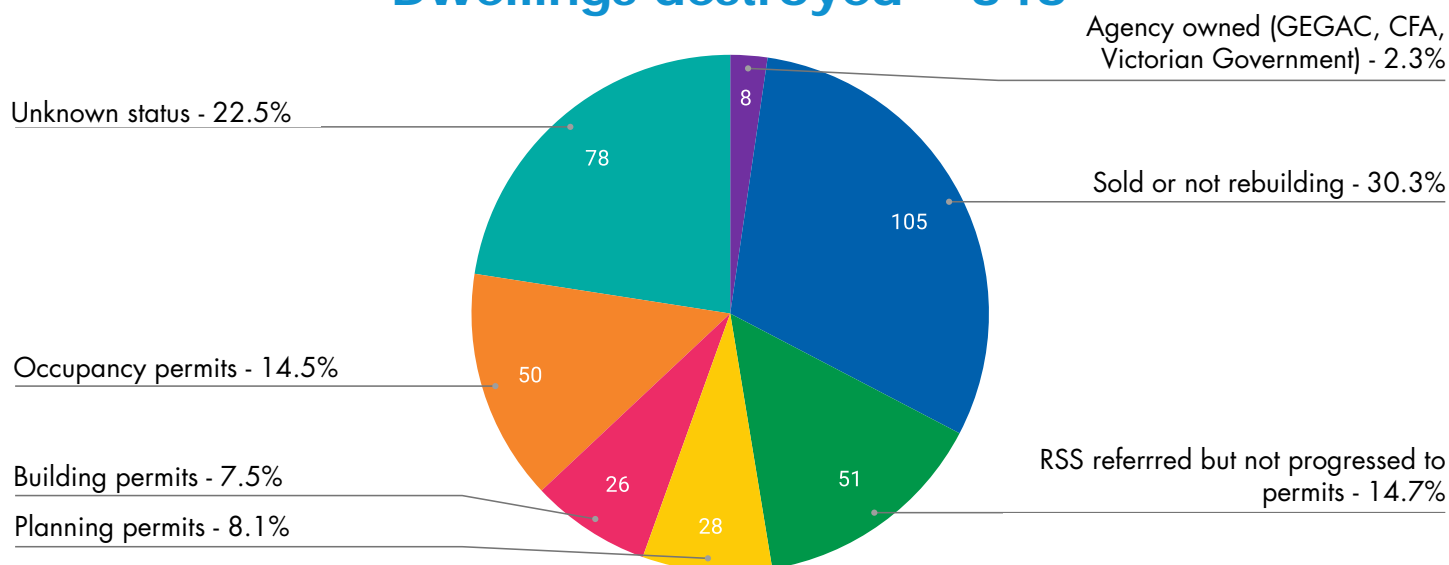
- » Financial inability to rebuild due to not insured or under insured or not having the financial means due to fixed income for example: aged pension or unemployment.
- » Financially unable to meet the rising cost associated with building materials, supply chain issues or securing the services of a builder. Melbourne experienced a 17% price increase for year to March 2022, Materials supply and skills shortages are not expected to ease in the foreseeable future.
- » Living within a non-compliant building pre-fires, and do not wish to be told what to do. It is too expensive to rebuild in a compliant way.
- » Age – a cohort of older single men, living remotely who no longer have the physical ability to rebuild themselves.

Rebuilding presents complex issues which require more effort and attention from all levels of government and other partners. We are advocating strongly in relation to these issues with both the Victorian and Federal Government and working to bring together partners that may be able to assist in developing solutions to address these barriers.

Rebuilding in figures

Total number of properties identified as damaged/destroyed within the Secondary Impact Assessment is 1162 of which 346 were dwellings and 762 outbuildings.

Dwellings destroyed = 346



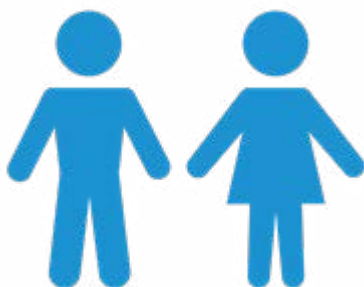
Short Term Modular Housing

Short Term Modular Housing (STMH) has been an option available for residents who lost their primary place of residence during the bushfires. STMH is a 'bridge' between accommodation provided in the weeks and months after the fires and the long-term rebuild of a dwelling. Expressions of interest to secure a STMH closed in September 2021.

Since inception, BRV have provided 58 STMH to sites providing accommodation for 113 residents - 92 adults and 21 children.



58
STMH



92
adults



21
children

Complex Site Taskforce

BRV established the Complex Site Taskforce (CSTF) for property owners with a complex site, and where an alternative house site is not possible, a voluntary resettlement program may be available to those owners.

The RSS has made eight referrals for East Gippsland residents to the CSTF for specialist rebuilding advice. Seven of those residents have received CSTF advice and three have subsequently progressed to an approved planning permit to rebuild. There is one current referral still in progress.

Four of the referred residents also requested a property valuation from the Victorian Government. One of these residents subsequently sold their property to the Government under the Retreat and Resettlement Program, which offers the owners of complex properties the opportunity to sell and relocate to a lower-risk location.

Restoring Public Assets

Restoration of Public assets was largely completed early in the recovery process with the delivery of over 65 projects and activities finalised by May 2021. Since the second progress report, the remaining public infrastructure restoration projects have been completed, this includes Buchan-Orbost Road and the last of Councils infrastructure to be replaced, the Genoa Footbridge.

The destruction of the historic 94-year-old bridge in the Black Summer Bushfires greatly impacted the community. The bridge had served as an important pedestrian link between the popular wayside stop, playground and tennis court, and the township. The construction of the new 117-metre bridge reinstates that connection across the Genoa River. As this project did not meet external funding guidelines, Council was able to fund the \$1.5 million project using Federal funds allocated for other roads projects. We understood the importance of the project to the community and were able to move quickly to rebuild it.



Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning

Many of the areas impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires were again impacted by severe weather events throughout 2021-22 with the most significant impact in early April 2022 causing new damage and, in some cases, re-damaging already repaired infrastructure that was damaged in the bushfires. While recovery works are continuing as part of the bushfire recovery effort, they are now coupled with storm and flood recovery.

Some highlights of public asset recovery include:

- » 7,166 km of public land roads have been reopened and repaired since the 2019-20 bushfires.
- » Nine months to March 2022, more than 110 km of roads and tracks have been reopened along with hazardous tree management at 18 important visitor areas and campgrounds.
- » Buchan Primary school students helped plant 70 trees with the Buchan Rangers, Gunaikurnai Rangers and East Gippsland Landcare Network team to help revegetate an area of the North Arm.
- » New Mallacoota jetties at day visitor areas at Genoa River Fire Trail and Sou-West Arm have been installed - 'building back better' in fire recovery.

Parks Victoria

April 2022 floods severely impacted Parks Victoria visitor sites in East Gippsland, a number of which were also impacted from the 2019/20 bushfires including Yeerung River area, McKenzie Rainforest Walk and Cape Conran Conran. This recent flooding caused coastal erosion, damage to infrastructure including bridges, roads and walking tracks. Subsequent closure of some sites has occurred, work is underway to repair damaged infrastructure and reopen sites. Future recover priorities for Parks Victoria include continued replacement of critical infrastructure at key visitor sites including Cape Conran, Mallacoota and Buchan (see below) and continuation of road repairs.

- » Buchan – temporary bridge installed to allow visitor access, Site Concept Plan in final stages of development, Gunaikurnai Cultural Trail construction completed by GLaWAC Natural Resource Management team, hazardous tree works completed and on-going.
- » Cape Conran – Roofed accommodation replacement is underway, toilets have been rebuilt in Banksia Bluff campground and East Cape day visitor site, Salmon Rocks Lookout replacement has been completed, Yeerung Beach access steps rebuilt
- » Mallacoota – Four jetties have been rebuilt around the Mallacoota Inlet, planning and community engagement has been completed for delivery of Victorian Government funded economic stimulus projects
- » Mueller Inlet Campground reopened after work was completed to improve safety and repair facilities at the site including rebuilding burnt fences, erosion control to protect campsites and tracks, arborist assessment and removal of tree hazards near campsites, and significant clearing of bushfire regeneration around the campground and nearby walking tracks
- » Sections of the Wilderness Coast Walk from Wingan Inlet via Shipwreck Creek to Mallacoota have reopened for visitor access
- » McKenzie River Rainforest Walk has reopened to the public following replacement of boardwalks, signs, tree hazard removal and track resurfacing.
- » Boardwalk on the Fly Cove Walk - Wingan Inlet Beach Access reopened in October 2021
- » There remains significant recovery works including the Thurra River bridge and access to Point Hicks Lighthouse.



Strengthening resilience

The bushfires have further heightened our communities' awareness and desire to build resilience into their core planning and into the thinking of community preparedness. For all levels of government and agencies to incorporate resilience into rebuilding or upgrading public infrastructure or programs to build stronger recovery for future events.

Community Resilience and Development Program - Community Hall Resilience Improvements

Works for the Community Resilience and Development Program have been completed across many areas of the Shire. This program includes a Bushfire Attack Level Assessment (BAL) on all halls and the supply and installation of Audio-Visual equipment to support remote and rural communities to remain connected not only through recovery but all year round. Electrical switchboard upgrades and installation of a transfer switch in all halls where required and ember proofing works are still progressing.

"When people can't access their support systems or let families know they're safe, for days and days, it can escalate their trauma. But with STAND, people can start to talk to others almost immediately. The trauma doesn't get prolonged, which means the recovery cycle can start to kick in."

Shane Turner
Emergency Management, East Gippsland Shire Council



Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND)

Community consultation has revealed that power outages and loss of communication are among the first things to affect them in disasters, making both of those a priority.

Council collaborated with the Department of Jobs Precincts and Roads (DJPR) and NBN on the completion of thirty-seven Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) satellite communication systems on community facilities, complementing the existing eight systems currently installed in our LGA. The STAND program is an Australian Government funded program which aims to increase and improve telecommunications resilience in bushfire affected communities.

The STAND is essentially a Satellite system which provides free WiFi access for up to 40 users in the event of emergency. The rollout across the shire started on 29 November 2021, boosting internet connectivity resilience and has already helped locals in disaster-prone areas to stay connected to emergency and support services.

The Commonwealth has committed to fund satellite service costs for the first three years. The work on the above initiative assists the efforts currently being undertaken by the CRCs and community representative groups, who are developing a resilience profile and disaster preparedness measures for future events.

The additional STAND locations are: Bemm River CFA Station, Benambra Recreation Reserve, Bendoc Hall, Bonang Hall, Bruthen Hall, Bullumwaal Mechanics Institute, Bundar valley, Bundarra (STAND only), Cabbage Tree Creek Hall, Clifton Creek Hall, Club Terrace Old School, Cobungra CFA (STAND only), Combienbar Hall, Ensay Hall, Ensay Recreation Reserve, Fernbank CFA Station, Flaggy Creek Hall and Recreation Reserve, Gelantipy CFA Station, Genoa Hall, Glen Valley Hall, Glenaladale Hall, Goongerah Community Hall, Johnsonville Hall, Lake Tyers Beach Hall, Lindenow Recreation Reserve, Lindenow South Recreation Reserve, Marlo CFA Station, Nowa Nowa Hall, Raymond Island Hall, Sarsfield Hall, Swan Reach Recreation Reserve, Swifts Creek Hall, Tambo Crossing, Tamboon (STAND only), Tubbut Community Hall, Wairewa Hall and Wulgulmerang Hall.



POWER:
Generator



**COMMUNITY
CONNECTIVITY:**
AV/TV



**OPTIONAL
EXTRAS:**

Static Water Tanks
Standpipe/bores

Static water tanks and domestic bores

Increased accessibility to water is helping to ensure communities have the best chance at protecting themselves and their assets. 40 static water tanks are now strategically placed across the East Gippsland municipality at locations identified in consultation with local CFA brigades, DELWP (Forest Fire Management Victoria) and Council. Each tank is constructed from concrete to ensure they withstand any threat from fire. They are approximately 46,000 litres in size and have CFA/ DELWP compatible fittings (locked to inhibit water being taken for non-legitimate purposes).

Funding received through the BRV will provide an additional 20 static water tanks. These tanks will be installed across the bushfire affected areas of our municipality – resulting in 78 static water tank and domestic bore locations across Shire where water will be readily accessible in emergency situations.

The concrete tanks are for firefighting purposes only and contribute to saving lives, protecting homes and critical community infrastructure during a bushfire event. They provide surety for responders when all other utility systems fail, as they are independent of any other system and can each fill up to 23 firetruck loads of water.

The Static Water Tank Project has enabled water to be more conveniently accessed and reduced the time to get water to the fire. Water tanks are currently located in most communities which were affected by the bushfires. Council is also seeking funding for generators to provide back-up power where required.

Bruthen Fire Brigade Captain provides his endorsement of the placement of water tanks in the EGSC catchment area:

“Given that sufficient water points did not exist (a result of five years of drought); the Dukes Road water tank was not only well sited - but provided a key firefighting capability for CFA and Forest Fire Management crews alike.”

Tamboon settlement – 2019/20 Bushfires

A 47,000 litre tank was located in Tamboon before the 2019/20 fires reached the settlement.

A community organization utilised the tank around the clock on a continual basis. The location, capacity and refill speed of the tank meant the more time consuming and less safe lake refill option could be avoided.

The static water tank was critical in achieving better resilience and recovery for this remote settlement.



46,000L concrete static water tank in Mallacoota

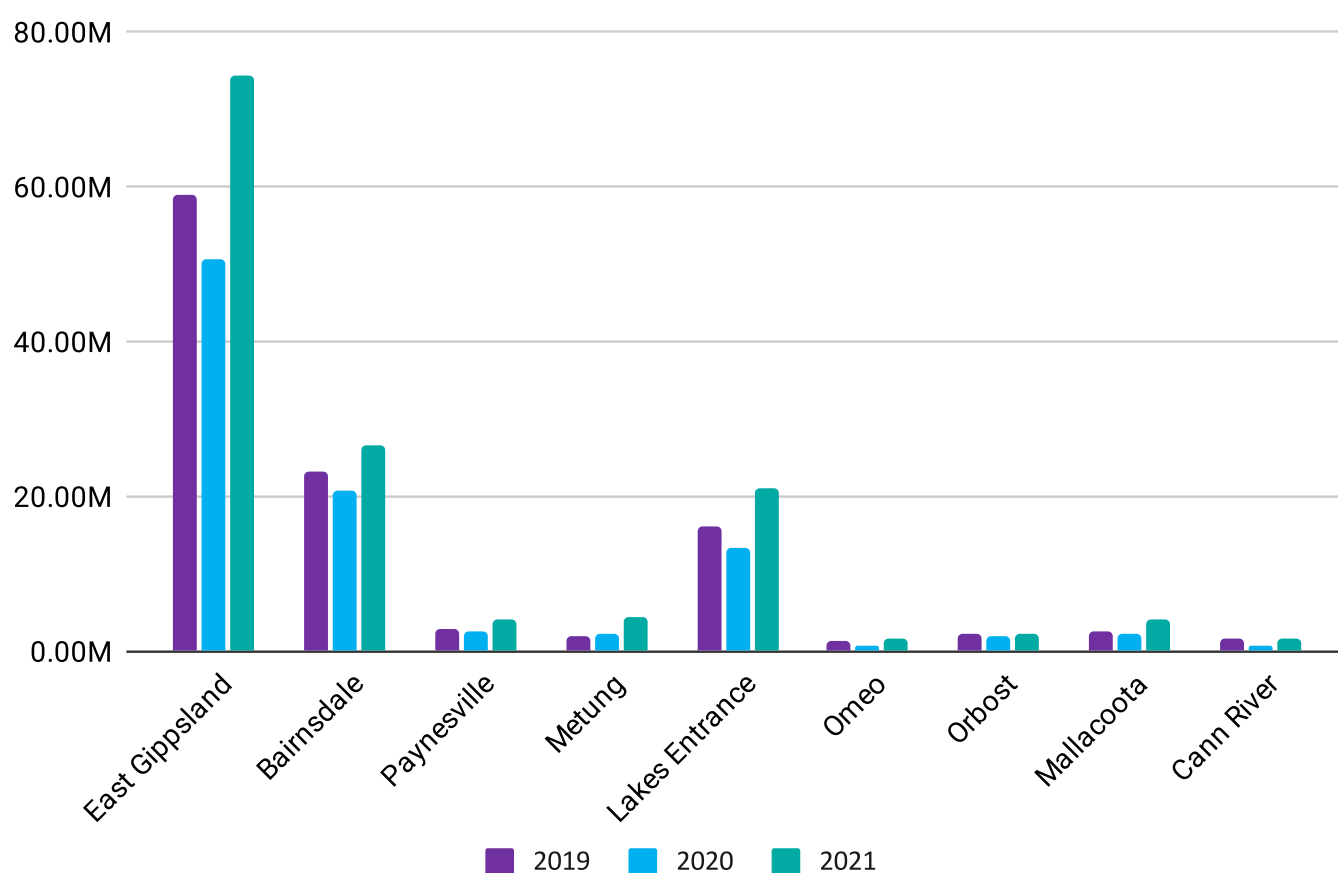
Economic

East Gippsland's economic environment has experienced substantial investment and reinvigoration following the Black Summer Bushfires and the COVID-19 Pandemic. The flow of State and Commonwealth funding, together with strong agency partnerships and collaboration has supported the region's small business, business development, tourism, events and agricultural sectors in their recovery efforts over the past two years.

Challenges to business such as restrictions on public travel and social gatherings, compliance with health mandates requiring proof of vaccinations on entry further compounded business' ability to trade post the bushfire event and continued throughout 2021. Today, disrupted supply chains, labor shortages, a tightening housing market making attracting workers difficult and rising inflation continue to create an unpredictable business environment. Despite these, East Gippsland's economy has shown healthy indicators of recovery with Gross Regional Product, local expenditure* and visitation all trending positively. [See figures 1 and 2]

Figure 1: Total expenditure (\$ Million)

Expenditure Across East Gippsland

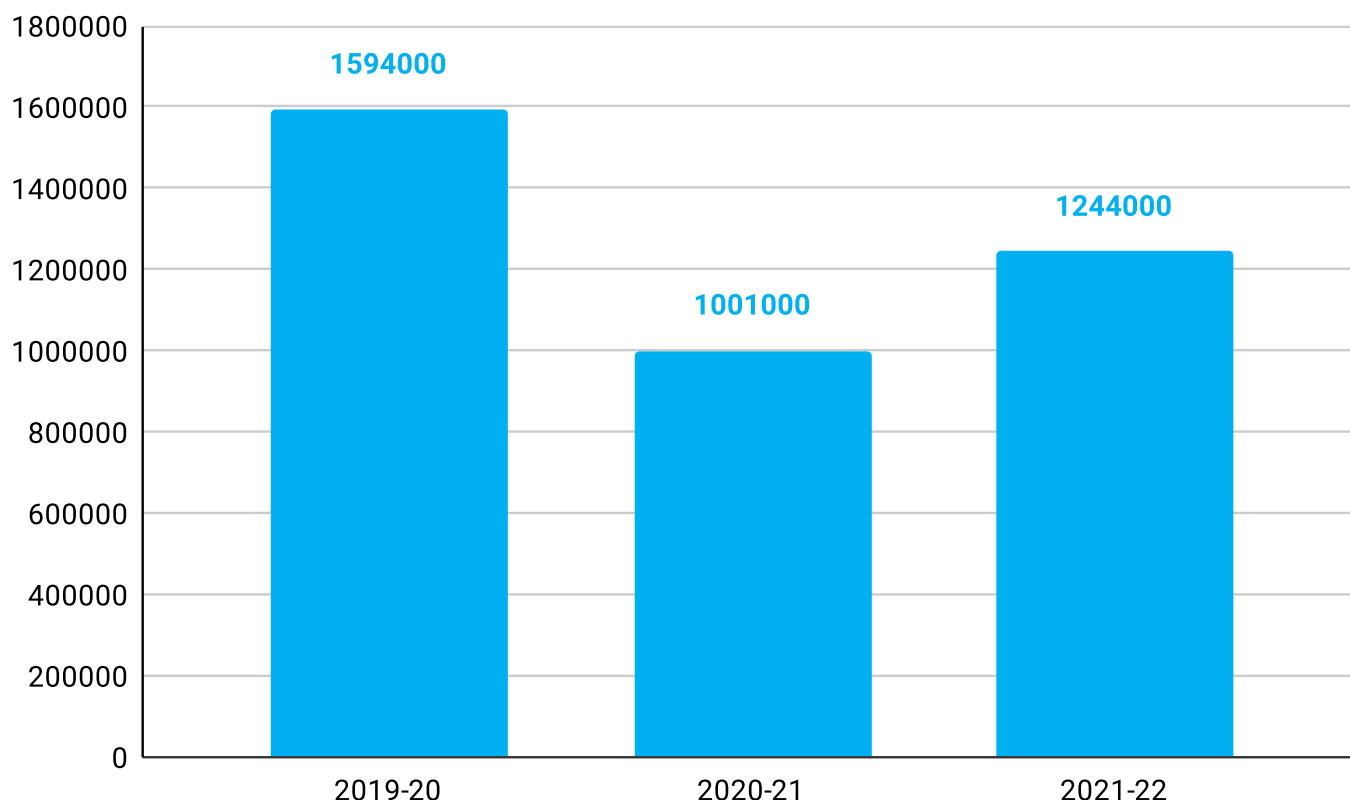


	East Gippsland	Bairnsdale	Paynesville	Metung	Lakes Entrance	Omeo	Orbost	Mallacoota	Cann River
2019	58.81M	23.15M	2.91M	1.97M	15.98M	1.30M	2.31M	2.57M	1.64M
2020	50.56M	20.78M	2.55M	2.21M	13.31M	0.80M	2.04M	2.35M	0.82M
2021	74.39M	26.63M	4.00M	4.26M	21.02M	1.65M	2.32M	4.18M	1.66M

*source: Spendmap (credit card transactions tracking)

Figure 2: Domestic Visitation

East Gippsland - Total Domestic Visitation



Small Business Recovery Mentoring Services

Small Business Recovery Mentoring Services provided 929 businesses with case management support as COVID-19 compounded bushfire impacts on commercial operators across the region. Council coordinated referrals to the program through its Business Concierge and convened intel-sharing sessions of the many business support agencies active in the region, including Good Shepard, Commonwealth Entrepreneur Strengthening Business Mentoring Program and SBRMS in order to maximise effectiveness on the ground.

Training and Development Programs

More than 2,600 businesses participated in over various industry capability programs delivered throughout the year. These programs included:

- » Agri-business development (12-month program)
- » Women in business
- » Lean manufacturing – business improvement
- » Small business marketing
- » Getting Social – digital marketing
- » Tourism 101
- » Events make good business
- » Nature based tourism forums
- » Regenerative tourism
- » Visual merchandising

Enterprise Facilitation (Pilot)

As part of the larger Local Economic Recovery Streetscape Project for Buchan and Bruthen, Council launched an exciting new program to support the development and growth of business ideas. The Buchan and Bruthen Business Boost program has been modelled on the internationally successful 'Sirrolli method' of enterprise facilitation and is supported by Ignite! (Sydney-based organisation and Sirrolli Masters, working with asylum seekers establishing new lives and business in Australia). The program launched locally in July 2022 and it's hoped, with additional funding, that it can be expanded to support new business development across other bushfire impacted townships of East Gippsland.

Shopfront Improvement Program

A \$100,000 shop front improvement and visual merchandising program benefited 52 businesses across the region, helping to lift street appeal and customer dwell times. The program was over-subscribed.

Digital Connectivity

In the wake of the bushfires, Council commissioned a report into the lived experience of digital connectivity and communication services across East Gippsland. The report provides deep insight into the shortfalls of critical public safety and business-enabling communication technology, infrastructure and services currently available in the region. From this, needs were prioritised and matched against potential funding sources (such as the \$200M Connecting Victoria Fund), serviced providers and responsible agencies, resulting in a robust and invaluable document to guide advocacy and pitch for game changing infrastructure and connectivity enhancements. The report is now publicly available from Council's website.

Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032

Council's draft Economic Development Strategy embraces a 10-year Economic Vision that reflects the municipality's economic drivers and opportunities and looks at short, medium and long-term priorities. This is accompanied by a four-year Council Action Plan. Delivering the strategy will involve coordinating efforts between Council and external stakeholders. The strategy takes into consideration businesses working to bounce back from the economic shocks of Drought, Bushfire, Floods and COVID-19 to establish a 'new normal' and is due for release in September 2022.

Investment Attraction

Building business investment confidence post Bushfires and in a COVID-10 impacted environment is a key focus for Council. A new Invest East Gippsland website is in development in preparation for launch in September 2022 together with the new Economic Development Strategy.

Outdoor Activation

Two rounds of State Government funding totaling \$750,000 enabled Council to help ease the costs associated with rapid business adaptation by those most impacted, in response to COVID-19. Support for a range of initiatives to maximise trading opportunities were welcomed. These including waiving of footpath trading permits, distribution of outdoor heaters, parklet trials, picket fencing, market umbrellas, deckchairs, entertainment, wellness programs, events, lighting and murals.

Events

Council secured \$190,000, in 2020-21, under the Commonwealth Government's Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grant program for event attraction into bushfire impacted areas. COVID related disruptions hindered program implementation, postponing event delivery for up to a year. Of the five events planned, two mountain bike events based in Omeo and "Under the Surface" - a public arts trail along the East Gippsland Rail Trail, are complete. Two sports participation events remain to be delivered late 2022.

Two Rural Recharge Community Concerts funded by the Victorian Government as part of Drought Recovery in 2019 (but unable to be delivered due to the bushfires and then COVID-19) were held in, and exclusively, for drought impacted communities. These two intimate family friendly concerts were headlined by renown Australian musician Paul Kelly and were a calendar highlight for Buchan (233 attendees) and Mallacoota (686 attendees) in March 2022.

Business Done Different – corporate events

Immediately following the bushfires, over 250 corporate pledges were made by Melbourne based business promising to bring their corporate retreats to bushfire impacted regions of Victoria. In support of this, Council secured funding through Business Events Australia for the development of a suite of Business-event marketing assets. Due to COVID-19, corporate pledges for East Gippsland were withdrawn, however Council produced the assets in anticipation of a return to business including image library, digital promotional brochure "East Gippsland – Business Done Different", website content and marketing plan. The "Business Done Different" Campaign launches in August 2022.

Marketing

Buy local campaigns and outdoor activation initiatives throughout the year supported local traders to maximise their offerings. The February 2022 launch of the East Gippsland Farm Gate Trail "Love where it's Grown, Caught, Made" focused on local producers and encouraged the community and visitors to explore the region and buy direct from the farmer.

Tourism marketing and media campaigns delivered by Destination Gippsland consistently featured the array of nature based and culinary experiences to be enjoyed in East Gippsland and helped to maintain awareness of the region in a competitive consumer market during COVID-19. Destination Gippsland won the 2021 Victorian and National Tourism Awards for Destination Marketing for their "GIPPs All Kinds of Wonder LAND" Campaign.

Two key visitor guides for East Gippsland have been commissioned – Mariner's Guide to the Gippsland Lakes and an Official Visitor Guide. Content creation is in progress with both guides due for release ahead of the 2022 peak tourism season.

Top Tourism Towns Awards

Council coordinated the applications of four East Gippsland towns into the Victorian Top Tourism Town Awards with Lakes Entrance acknowledged as a finalist on both occasions and award runner up in 2021.

Eco-Destination

A series of nature-based tourism forums and a regenerative tourism workshop were embraced by over 150 tourism and community stakeholders as part of our commitment to obtaining Eco-Destination Status (globally recognised benchmark). Ten tourism business have the opportunity to become fully EcoTourism Accredited. The EcoDestination and EcoTourism Accreditation programs were funded through a bushfire recovery focused partnership between EcoTourism Australia, the World Wildlife Fund and a collaborative approach led by East Gippsland Shire Council with Parks Victoria, GLaWAC, DELWP and Destination Gippsland with the region's final audit due September 2022.

Tourism Opportunity Plans

Community consultations were held in the Cann Valley, Buchan and Errinundra to Snowy districts, with community members participating in discussions with an independent industry expert regarding potential tourism opportunities for their regions. Three Tourism Opportunity Plans (TOPs) were then developed with each community identifying their top three projects for priority delivery. The TOPs outline a range of initiatives aimed at increasing the length of visitor stay in the district, along with higher visitor spend levels. They also offer an immediate starting point and highlight a good mix of community-local operator driven initiatives along with some which require the involvement of Council and key recovery stakeholders.



Research and Insights

Since the bushfires Council has invested in a suite of data platforms for insights to better inform decision making. These include, SpendMap (which tracks credit card spending and dissects data in several ways for analysis), Localis (which aggregates online booking in real-time with both retrospective insights and forecasting capability, as well as mobility tracking to determine source of origin, length of stay and visitor analysis for more targeted marketing and effective campaign spending).

In direct response to the community's business recovery priorities Council researched industrial land availability in Mallacoota. Several potential sites have been identified and further investigation is required to determine viability of the options.

The Road Ahead

Continued effort is required to support the region's diverse business sectors with future resilience planning, business capability strengthening and progressing key priorities from Council's newly developed Economic Development Strategy.

With the national economy forecast to tighten in 2022-23 due to inflation and the rising cost of living, maintaining focus on East Gippsland's business sustainability and fostering strong community and business to business support for purchasing locally will be essential in the immediate short-term.



Culture and Healing

Aboriginal Culture and Healing

BRV are working to embed self-determination into processes for Aboriginal community-led outcomes . This work is resulting in a new, collaborative, and authentic approach between Aboriginal communities and government. Together with the Aboriginal community, BRV and other recovery partners are highlighting the importance of community-led outcomes, for not only Victorians but all Australians.

Outcomes/Recovery Aspirations:

- » Aboriginal people's unique experiences of trauma is addressed, and healing supported
- » Recovery and resilience of the whole community are strengthened through Aboriginal culture, knowledge, traditions, and connection to country
- » Aboriginal communities have increased capability to lead recovery and healing

Strategy development

A state-wide Recovery Plan for addressing the needs of Aboriginal community in bushfire recovery is in development to provide consistency, greater oversight and better alignment with broader disaster responses. The Recovery Plan will outline the process to enable Aboriginal people informing and designing their recovery outcomes. BRV have engaged the Federation of Victoria Traditional Owners Group (FVTOC) to lead appropriate and tailored consultation and strategy design that meets the needs of Aboriginal Victorians impacted by the bushfires - utilising their vast network of community contacts through its membership and subsidiary enterprises. The FVTOC will understand what is available right now for community, where are the gaps of current responses of government and how best to assert Aboriginal self-determination into bushfire recovery as a fundamental requirement.

Development of a Recovery Plan will provide the foundation for recovery to address issues including:

- » lack of appropriate engagement, trauma informed service design that considers the devastating generational impacts,
- » Victorian government commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and cultural safety,
- » acknowledge and honour Aboriginal communities' deep connections land, flora, fauna for healing.

For further information on Aboriginal Culture and Healing recovery progress and to read Stories of Bushfire Recovery visit [Bushfire recovery progress - Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-progress).



Funding

- » The 2021-2022 Aboriginal Culture and Healing Community Grant Program valued at \$4M was launched 24 November 2021, assessment is underway, the ask is \$3.3 million for nine projects.
- » Bushfire recovery grants for Aboriginal communities 2020-2021 To date, \$3,679,108 has been released to eight Aboriginal organisations to support their communities' recover from the 2019-2020 Bushfires from a \$4.197 allocation. The organisations utilised the funding to undertake a range of Aboriginal cultural heritage and Aboriginal community support programs. Two of the eight funded projects have since completed their activities, due to short-term outputs. The remaining six projects are due to complete by 31 December 2021, and two will end by 31 July 2023.
- » Community Mitigation and Crisis Management (ACMCM) 2021-2022 The Minister has awarded \$2,764,034 to seven Aboriginal organisations to undertake bushfire mitigation and planning activities as well as building infrastructure upgrades, BRV in the process of issuing funding agreements

Future Priorities for East Gippsland

- » Ensuring Aboriginal Communities voices are leading in recovery management solutions, creating an environment for Cultural exchange
- » Building reconciliation practices into everyday work.
- » Cultural Awareness in building capacity, knowledge, confidence and understanding within East Gippsland, enabling, encouraging individuals/communities to engage confidently with Aboriginal stakeholders and community in the region:
- » Provide opportunities to strengthen networks and relationships with key stakeholders
- » Develop the Reconciliation Action Plans with Council.
- » Coordinate & support regional ACCOs/ACCHOs to deliver funded recovery projects



From Bushfire Recovery Grants for Aboriginal Communities

Appendix A

Local Economic Recovery Grants Round 1 - \$3.483M

East Gippsland Community Resilience and Development Program (Stage One) - \$1,043,955	Nowa Nowa Boat Ramp Jetty Upgrade \$75,000
Omeo Rodeo Grounds upgrade - \$341,600	Revitalising Livingstone Park – Omeo's Centrepiece - \$924,690
Buchan & Gelantipy community connection and resilience through our facilities - \$118,127	Tambo Crossing Community Facility - \$426,048
Triangle Park (Marlo) Playground Upgrade - \$115,000	Genoa Tennis Courts Upgrade - \$184,617
Swan Reach Netball Court Repair and Upgrade - \$114,688	East Gippsland Children with Additional Needs Working Group - \$140,000

Local Economic Recovery Regional Economic Stimulus Program \$17.802M

Buchan - Streetscape and Local Link Improvements. \$2,800,000	Bruthen - Streetscape Enhancements \$1,010,000
Lakes Entrance Old Slipway Activation \$562,000	Omeo Livingston Park \$4,372,000
Committee for Gippsland Inc: GROW Gippsland - Bushfire Recovery Business Procurement Support \$500,000	Destination Gippsland: Dark Skies Trail - \$267,000
Sailors Grave Brewing - Dune Town \$2,350,000	Mallacoota Abalone Limited: Rebuild Value Add of Mallacoota Abalone Limited Processing Facility Expansion - Stage 2B \$3,000,000
Riviera Nautic Jetties Redevelopment \$190,000	Tambo Valley Honey: Tambo Valley Honey Shop \$400,000
Metung Hot Springs \$1,500,000	Workways Australia Limited: Envite Environment - Training and Skills for Bushfire Economic Recovery \$851,600

Local Economic Recovery Grants Round 2 \$9.153M

All Abilities Upgrade to improve visitor experience – Lakes Entrance Recreation Reserve \$402,125	Cultural Journey and Community healing – Moogji \$362,000
Bruthen Recreation Reserve Facilities Upgrade \$1,067,000	East Gippsland Mobile Play2Learn to support bushfire recovery \$432,549
Construction of accessible canoe launch and signage Buchan, Gelantipy and Districts \$40,250	East Gippsland Rail Trail Surface Upgrades - \$1,500,000
Goongerah Support - \$87,260	Mallacoota Golf Course Redevelopment Project \$1,889,357
Major Upgrade – Mallacoota Hall - \$818,000	Marlo Community Hall Upgrade - \$336,600
Rebuild of Mallacoota Pony Club Facility \$296,000	Swifts Creek Recreation Reserve Upgrade \$1,922,196

Grant funding - Black Summer Grants

Internally Displaced People: 2019-20 Bushfires, an iterative analysis East Gippsland VIC \$671,872	Pottery/Sculpture Open Art Studio Space East Gippsland VIC \$43,091
The Buchan Caves Hotel Emergency Generator East Gippsland VIC \$73,888	Safe, Healthy and Resilient Communities – Emergency Preparedness East Gippsland VIC \$448,912
Mallacoota Emergency Services Facility East Gippsland VIC \$2,570,000	Bairnsdale Airport Runway Upgrade East Gippsland VIC \$9,962,715
Mallacoota Bowling Club Community Hub East Gippsland VIC \$85,000	East Gippsland Hub for Learners East Gippsland VIC \$420,500
Emergency Telecommunications Installation in Remote Tamboon East Gippsland VIC \$209,195	Emergency Telecommunications Installation in Remote Bundara Valley East Gippsland VIC \$202,056.00
Claim the Past - Recover the Future East Gippsland VIC \$1,051,951	Omeo Golf Club Upgrade Project East Gippsland VIC \$128,780
Embedding resilience in community fire response East Gippsland VIC \$299,524	Mallacoota Mudbrick Pavilion Upgrade East Gippsland VIC \$493,628
Construction of the Gippsland Agricultural Recovery and Resilience Center East Gippsland VIC \$984,650	Swifts Creek Community Hall Upgrade East Gippsland VIC \$878,040
East Gippsland Community Bus Project East Gippsland VIC \$89,236	Miva Miva accessible cottages for the frail impacted by the bushfires East Gippsland VIC \$2,150,000
After the fires: Supporting communities to recover and build resilience East Gippsland VIC \$570,864	Development of a Community Bushfire Defence and Response Facility East Gippsland VIC \$91,283
East Gippsland Timber Milling Project East Gippsland VIC \$520,560	Orbost Tennis Club/Community Hub East Gippsland VIC \$324,266
Connection breeds resilience - farmers breakfast and workshops. East Gippsland VIC \$32,000	Community-led recovery & resilience through music in Far East Gippsland East Gippsland VIC \$456,480
Swifts Creek Bush Nurse Centre Recovery East Gippsland VIC \$158,126	Operation Phoenix - The rebuild of the Mallacoota Gun Club - Stage 2 East Gippsland VIC \$276,277
Mount Taylor Mountain Bike Park Skills Park and Facilities Improvements East Gippsland VIC \$360,030	Twin Rivers Community Hub / Men's Shed Association Building Project East Gippsland VIC \$150,000
Omeo Recreation Reserve Netball & Tennis Court Upgrade East Gippsland VIC \$659,000.00	Outward Bound Snowy River Base Camp and 'Recalibrate' Program Development East Gippsland VIC \$443,375
Cann River- Mick Baum Park Skate Park Redevelopment East Gippsland VIC \$561,000	Raymond Island Community Hall Extension East Gippsland VIC \$146,800
Creating a vibrant community hub - upgrading Lake Tyers Beach Hall. East Gippsland VIC \$400,000	Bemm River Footpath Development East Gippsland VIC \$1,027,253
Music Changes Lives for the Better: Building Community Sense of Belonging East Gippsland VIC \$318,546	Mallacoota & District Tool Library Project East Gippsland VIC \$124,899
Club Terrace Community Facility Project East Gippsland VIC \$751,250	Online psychology and financial counselling in bushfire affected regions multiple LGAs \$389,250
Lending a Legal HAND: Helpful Advice following Natural Disaster multiple LGAs \$285,696	Community-led bushfire recovery response for children and families multiple LGAs \$5,610,000
Culture Hub - Art, Stories and Culture Project multiple LGAs \$55,000	